

Knowing of your interest in defense and homeland security issues, I wanted to let you know that I am deeply concerned by President Obama's announcement that he will close the Guantanamo Bay prison facility in Cuba within the next year. This facility holds suspected terrorists captured on the battlefield abroad, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, the operational mastermind of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Some of these enemy combatants were scheduled to face a trial by military tribunal for their alleged terrorist activities, and I believe these trials should proceed. Hundreds have been released after a thorough review of their threat level, though I would point out with great concern that U.S. officials believe several dozen have returned to the terrorist battlefield. Still others are not yet at trial status, but are considered too dangerous to be released to their native country, or have been denied reentry by that nation.

Most Americans understandably would not want these terrorist suspects to be transported to their backyards, as may very well occur when Guantanamo Bay is shut down. This action would needlessly place the American people at greater risk, and likely grant the suspected terrorists with additional legal protections under the U.S. Constitution that most Americans believe they should not enjoy. Additionally, moving these suspected terrorists to the United States could present another politically attractive target for a terrorist attack within our borders. I will urge President Obama to fully explain what he plans to do with the remaining enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay. He should not bow to political pressure and allow these dangerous individuals to relocate to the United States or potentially return to the battlefield. If a reasonable and safe alternative is not presented, I firmly believe Guantanamo Bay should remain open.